



South Carolina Department of Agriculture Hugh Weathers, Commissioner

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Partnership Unites SC Shrimp Industry and State Agencies to Raise Awareness for SC Wild Shrimp throughout Lowcountry - *Program Asks South Carolinians to "Go Wild" and Demand Local, Wild Shrimp*

CHARLESTON, SC – June 5, 2008 – Through a grant from the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the South Carolina Sea Grant Extension Program, Clemson University, the South Carolina Department of Agriculture, and the South Carolina shrimp industry today announced a new challenge for South Carolinians to "Go Wild" for local shrimp. The partnership has implemented a series of summer-long outdoor board messages, encouraging South Carolinians throughout the Lowcountry to "Go Wild" by asking for and buying local, wild shrimp.

Launched at the beginning of this year's shrimping season, the agencies are working to promote South Carolina wild shrimp and to make South Carolinians aware of the barriers facing local shrimpers. With rising fuel costs, increased foreign competition and the loss of working waterfronts, South Carolina shrimpers are seeing a loss in sales and profits in the industry.

"South Carolina consumers often assume that they are eating South Carolina shrimp when dining in local seafood restaurants when in fact they are eating foreign, frozen shrimp," said Commissioner Hugh Weathers. To address these issues, the partnership has created an outdoor board campaign encouraging South Carolinians to "Go Wild" for South Carolina wild shrimp in order to support our local commercial shrimp industry through the purchase and consumption of shrimp from the waters of South Carolina.

"The program is based on the idea that if South Carolinians know where to find local shrimp, they will be more than willing to choose local over imported," said Robert Bacon, Program Leader of the SC Sea Grant Extension Program.

The ability to distinguish between local and imported shrimp has been made easier thanks to the South Carolina Department of Agriculture. The SCDA, under the leadership of Commissioner Hugh Weathers, has launched both Certified SC Grown and Fresh on the Menu, two programs that identify retailers and restaurants, which have pledged to serve and sell South Carolina grown food and products. Details about where to find Certified SC Grown products and a listing of Fresh on the Menu restaurants is available at www.agriculture.sc.gov.

Wild American Shrimp, Inc. (WASI), representing shrimpers in eight southern states including South Carolina, focuses on raising public awareness about the advantages of choosing local wild shrimp. WASI takes the focus one step further by only certifying local wild shrimp that meet stringent quality standards to ensure that premium shrimp products are brought to market. For more information about WASI, visit www.wildamericanshrimp.com.

“Shrimping has historically been a vital industry for our state,” said Commissioner Weathers. “And in order for local shrimpers to continue contributing to our state’s economy, South Carolinians can show their support by purchasing and asking for South Carolina wild shrimp.”

South Carolinians can look for “Go Wild” outdoor boards along the coast beginning now throughout the summer. South Carolina consumers can also look for Certified SC Grown signage on displays in stores throughout the state selling Certified SC Grown produce and products. Over 50 Charleston restaurants are currently participating in the Fresh on the Menu program, and plans are underway to implement the program throughout the Lowcountry this summer.

For more information about the SC Sea Grant Extension Program and the South Carolina shrimp industry, visit www.scseagrant.org/Extension/ and www.scshrimpmkt.com

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